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A COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP IN THE SOUTHERN TIER

Proposed Objectives

In our EDA University Center submission, we proposed to “conduct an integrated program of applied research, technical assistance, and training for elected and appointed officials, local business owners, and other community leaders to help them understand and overcome economic, demographic and organizational barriers that constrain economic development in a 13 county region in New York’s Southern Tier, known as the Pipeline4Progress region.” The overall goal is to build capacity, across the region, for collaboratively identifying, pursuing and achieving shared economic development goals, and, more specifically, to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and regional economic competitiveness.

As documented in our Year I Annual Report, three objectives were the focus of our work in the first year of the project: (1) understanding existing resources, collaborative relationships, specific needs, and opportunities in the P4P Region; (2) sharing existing training and research based information; and (3) creating a program that integrates applied research, training, technical assistance, and tool development to achieve the region’s goals identified in its regional action plan. These objectives were pursued through activities targeted to two regional pilot communities, one in the east and one in the west of the Southern Tier and identified and designed with teams of local economic and community development professionals.

As was noted in our Year II Annual Report, in Year II, we continued to work with local partners in the regional pilot communities, building on the activities and outcomes of Year I. Based on what our pilot community partners identified as economic development goals, existing and needed resources to meet those goals, and our understanding of related resources at Cornell and across the region, our Year II objectives were to focus our integrated applied research, training, technical assistance, and tool development programming on (1) increasing awareness of assets within the region, (2) sharing research-based information about economic development strategies of interest to the region; and (3) catalyzing collaborative and innovative regional partnerships designed to capitalize on existing and emerging economic development opportunities. Specifically, emphasis was placed on assets and emerging economic development opportunities relating to entrepreneurship and resources available through institutions of higher education.

In the Year II Annual Report, we also indicated that in Year III we would focus on the following four objectives and specific tasks:
Coordinated, collaborative and strategic community support for entrepreneurship

- Help pilot communities identify and pursue specific activities designed to build strategic community support for entrepreneurship.
- Create an “Entrepreneurial Friendly Community” certificate to recognize those communities/regions strategically and collaboratively coordinating efforts to support entrepreneurs as an economic development strategy.
- Increase awareness and accessibility of Youth Entrepreneurship curricula and training programs in the region.
- Host a conference to connect established entrepreneurs with resources at regional higher education institutions (Cornell Center for Materials Research, Alfred Ceramics Technology, St. Bonaventure and Cattaraugus County Business Development Association’s MBA program)

Coordinated, collaborative and strategic partnerships with colleges and universities in support of regional economic development

- Establish a network of regional colleges and university representatives focused on economic development.
- Host regular meetings to build awareness of activities and catalyze collaborative efforts.
- Host a first annual summit of this network designed to showcase regional economic development initiatives of institutions.

Coordinated, collaborative and strategic support for workforce development

- Project ION (a regional online resource designed to link college students to internship opportunities with businesses and industries) impact assessment.
- Help project ION to highlight innovative small to mid-sized green industry entrepreneurial companies and work with colleges to market these opportunities.
- Webinar featuring regional workforce development initiatives.
- Increase awareness and use of Essential NY Jobs!
- Host the “We Live NY Conference” targeted to the under-40 demographic, policymakers, and community and economic development officials for the purpose of showcasing regional assets and opportunities to attract and retain young people.
- Pilot Tompkins County Green Careers Pathway as a potential workforce development model.
**Continued ongoing support for capacity building via training, technical support, research, and network facilitation**

- Stronger Economies Together
- Vital Indicators for Enhanced Well-being
- State of Upstate NY Conference
- Support P4P’s efforts to expand their regional advisory board

In the following section, we describe the progress we’ve made towards these objectives as well as the specific activities undertaken during the first six months of Year III.

**Activities in Support of Year III Objectives**

**Coordinated, collaborative and strategic community support for entrepreneurship**

- Help pilot communities identify and pursue specific activities designed to build strategic community support for entrepreneurship.

- The Center’s education and technical services have provided the Greater Olean pilot team with critical tools to start developing a strategic community support for entrepreneurship. In particular, last May we collaborated with the RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship to host regional workshops and individual community meetings to introduce new concepts, best practices and tools to enhance economic development through entrepreneurship. Some of the key outcomes have been: 1) establishing a Cattaraugus County Entrepreneur Task Force; 2) mobilizing local and regional technical services for area manufacturers and agribusinesses; 3) strengthening business development resource ties to Cornell University and Alfred University; and 4) collaborating in a broader regional context by networking with business development professionals and business representatives from the Buffalo and Ithaca areas.

- Over a period of nine months, the Center provided the facilitation of Chemung County Community Empowerment Economic Development Workgroup. The outcome has been the adoption of action plans targeted to: 1) growing small businesses; 2) creating and nurturing an entrepreneurial culture; and 3) utilizing innovative developments and economic forecasts to enhance education and training programs. This effort has engaged the interests of over 500 Chemung residents with the goals of promoting successful aging and creating economic opportunities to retain young adults in the region. The Center is continuing to provide a facilitating role to implement the action plans.
• Create an “Entrepreneurial Friendly Community” certificate to recognize those communities/regions strategically and collaboratively coordinating efforts to support entrepreneurs as an economic development strategy and to help communities who want to be more “entrepreneurial friendly” understand some of the strategies for doing so.

• We are in the process of developing the assessment tool. We have conducted research to identify existing tools and criteria used in other states (e.g., Texas and Georgia). When completed, the tool will aid community members in identifying key characteristics of entrepreneurial friendly communities and a process they can use to implementing strategic support.

• Increase awareness and accessibility of Youth Entrepreneurship curricula and training programs in the region.

• As a result of the Center activities that emphasized youth entrepreneurship, community leaders from both the Greater Olean and Elmira pilot regions have identified youth focused action plans. The Chemung County Community Empowerment has adopted an action plan to develop K – 12 educational programming related to local history, culture and entrepreneurship to provide role models, build community pride and encourage young people to remain in our community.

• As an initial step, the Center shared the above action plan with Greater Southern Tier BOCES after school coordinators at the Elmira School District. The coordinators agreed about the importance of engaging youth in the entrepreneurship development activities and invited an extension educator to offer youth entrepreneurship after-school activities as part of the 21st Century Community Learning Center. We want to identify Elmira teens that have strong interest in entrepreneurship and provide educational opportunities that will build entrepreneurial skills. We completed an eight-week session at the Elmira Free Academy High School (November 2010 – December 2010) and will complete another eight-week session (February 2011-March 2011) at the Southside High School in Elmira. We are collaborating with Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) on the curriculum development.

• Greater Olean pilot team plans to build the capacity for youth entrepreneurship by providing RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship’s Energizing Entrepreneurship workshop to the area’s youth educators. This effort is part of the team’s strategic community support for entrepreneurship.

• Host a conference to connect established entrepreneurs with resources at regional higher education institutions (Cornell Center for Materials Research, Alfred Ceramics Technology, St. Bonaventure and Cattaraugus County Business Development Association’s MBA program)
The October 7, 2010 Southern Tier Business & Entrepreneur Conference was designed to strengthen connections among economic development service providers and regional businesses and cultivate connections between these groups and technology and research & development opportunities at Cornell and other leading research universities in the Southern Tier region. Held at St. Bonaventure University, the conference introduced regional industry representatives, entrepreneurs, and economic development professionals to partnership opportunities and initiatives of the Cornell Center for Materials Research, Alfred University’s Center for Advanced Ceramic Technology and St. Bonaventure University’s MBA Outreach Program. A real-time poll was conducted to gain a better understanding of the needs of businesses and entrepreneurs in the region. The conference also provided business development support in five technical resource categories: Research & Development, Entrepreneurship & Business Development, Public and Private Funding, Facility Expansion and Renovation, and Workforce Development.

By partnering upstate higher education institutions and economic development agencies and organizations, the conferences fostered the development of stronger ties and new collaborative initiatives among businesses/entrepreneurs, higher educational institutions and various business development programs. Attendees responding to the event evaluation identified networking opportunities, especially with other business people; presentations by CCMR and CACT and a panel presentation by regional business representatives entitled “Product Innovation through University Collaborations” as highlights of the conference. One participant, representing a business start-up, summed up his experience with the following statement: “Thanks for the opportunity and all the people I was able to meet and share my experiences with. It was a great event and I am glad I could be a part of it! It has been a very busy week, but I am glad I took the time to drive down there. I hope to be able to visit Cornell and discuss potential collaborations in the future for research or economic development partnerships. We may also be looking for new employees and Cornell would be a great resource for that.”

**Coordinated, collaborative and strategic partnerships with colleges and universities in support of regional economic development**

Our work towards establishing a network of regional colleges and university in the P4P region actually began in Year I when we started identifying higher education institutions and the programs within them with an economic development focus. We nurtured some of these connections through the Fall 2009 and 2010 Southern Tier Business and Entrepreneurs Conferences, increasing awareness of some of the services offered through regional institutions (see above). We are cultivating relationships with major research universities in the Pipeline4Progress region. We are also connecting with community colleges recognizing their importance in regional workforce development. These collaborations provided the leadership for the above referenced regional entrepreneurship conferences that reached nearly 200 people with new resources information and networking opportunities.
Since then, we’ve expanded our awareness of higher education institutions across the state through the creation of a database of all campus-based programs that support community and economic development. The database has been used to identify planning committee members and will be used to market a half-day workshop on “The Role of Universities and Colleges in Community and Economic Development “ scheduled for June 2011. The goals of the summit include (1) a sharing of activities to increase understanding and awareness of activities across the state and (2) having members identify opportunities to regularly and strategically collaborate to support economic development across New York.

In addition, to these activities the EDA University Center and CaRDI are helping to organize and will be facilitating a “cradle to college to career” pipeline summit hosted by Broome County Community College and Lockheed Martin, in the eastern part of the P4P region. This regional summit is being designed to identify aspects of the pipeline that is currently working well and ways it can be improved to better prepare young people and current employees for local and regional career opportunities.

**Coordinated, collaborative and strategic support for workforce development**

- Project ION (a regional online resource designed to link college students to internship opportunities with businesses and industries) impact assessment.

We are in the process of marketing Project ION.

- Help project ION to highlight innovative small to mid-sized green industry entrepreneurial companies and work with colleges to market these opportunities.

We are in the process of marketing Project ION.

- Webinar featuring regional workforce development initiatives.

On December 21, 2010 we hosted a webinar on “[Attracting and Retaining Young Adults: Research and Initiatives from New York State](#)” featuring several efforts in the Southern Tier dedicated to connecting young people to economic development opportunities in the region. The program description follows: Rural communities are concerned about the exodus of high school graduates and the challenge of getting both local and non-local young adults to stay, return, or move to the area to pursue careers and raise families. In response to this concern, community and economic development professionals are exploring and investing in strategies to retain and attract young adults. In this webinar we will share: (1) research undertaken by Cornell's Department of Development Sociology, with support from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, to better understand the ways youth perceive and explore career
opportunities; and (2) regional programs designed to connect local adolescents and non-local college students to regional career opportunities and other community assets.

- Increase awareness and use of Essential NY Jobs!

Host the “We Live NY Conference” targeted to the under-40 demographic, policymakers, and community and economic development officials for the purpose of showcasing regional assets and opportunities to attract and retain young people. We’ve started planning a track on community development for the We Live NY Conference with the goal of helping the estimated 1,000 young professionals expected to attend with a strong understanding of the ways community and economic development intersect and support one another. This track is being designed to complement those focused on economic development. Examples of workshops in this session include: Cornell’s “Rust to Green” community revitalization initiative, How to start a young professionals organization in your community, Green Building Initiatives, Paths to Sustainability, Grant Writing, and Vital Communities and Regional Vitality: The Role of Demographics; Green Career Pathways, and Entrepreneurship as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization - Mt. Morris case study

- Pilot Tompkins County Green Careers Pathway as a potential workforce development model.

Cornell Cooperative Extension is actively engaged in the education around green economy and energy challenges affecting NYS communities. Among others there are two critical factors for regional economic development – preparing the workforce and capitalizing on entrepreneurial opportunities. Tompkins County Extension has developed a successful program that is engaging youth in green workforce development. Building on this model, the Green Careers Pathway introduces comprehensive resource information for green jobs and career options to engage a broad cross section of the population.

Continued ongoing support for capacity building via training, technical support, research, and network facilitation

- Stronger Economies Together

The EDA University Center provided support to the development of a USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant that was funded and is now supporting a 9-module Regional Economic Development training program designed to guide communities of Tioga County and its surrounds through a process that assesses regional economic development opportunities and creates a plan for pursuing some. Focusing on supporting rural economic development through regional cooperation, the program will actively seek participation from land owners and agri-business owners to generate new business ideas for the area’s renewable land-based resources.

- Vital Indicators for Enhanced Well-being
The EDA University Center has worked with CaRDI staff to organize two workshops we will be holding in the Southern Tier region this Spring. The workshops will tailor CaRDI’s VIEW program to the region, helping participants better understand national and campus-based data resources that help inform economic and community development initiatives. State of Upstate NY Conference -

The Cornell EDA Center has been planning a major “State of Upstate New York” conference scheduled for June 2011. A strong regional focus on Upstate recognizes that communities and cities will be more successful in meeting their development goals if they understand their challenges and opportunities in a regional context. Upstate New York is comprised of dynamic regions each with their own set of assets. The regions are also united in some of the challenges that they face. The conference will focus on urban/suburban/rural issues and interdependencies across various upstate regions. The event will be data-driven, engaging and focused on community resiliency, partnerships and innovation. See also information below about events directly preceding and following the State of Upstate New York Conference.

Research

Attracting & Retaining Young Workforce in the Southern Tier

Cornell researchers from the Department of Development Sociology have designed a study of recent high school graduates to better understand how they make decisions about where to live and work. The research aims to identify appropriate measures to reverse the low in-migration rate of college-educated persons in upstate NY and to retain young workers. Cornell is working with four regional high schools (two rural, one urban, and one suburban). The members of the Class of 2008 were contacted to fill out a survey through Facebook, MySpace and email. Those without Facebook or other social networking accounts were contacted through the postal service. The survey results were combined with findings from key informant interviews and focus group meetings with high school seniors. Our findings indicate that recent high school graduates anticipate being geographically mobile and that both local economic and social conditions may be important push factors in selecting their expected residents. Educational aspirations, and perceived efforts of improvement by local communities also play an important role in shaping residential expectations.

This research was presented at the New York State Rural School Conference, the Rural Sociological Society Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, a USDA w-2001 multi-state research group mini-conference, and a CARDI webinar on sustainable communities.
Experiential Education Collaborations between Higher Education Institutions and Economic Development Agencies and Organizations

St. Bonaventure University, a key partner in our western regional pilot community, designed and is conducting research to understand how, if at all, colleges and universities in the region with educational programs related to economic development (business programs, entrepreneurship curricula, economic development classes, incubators, etc.) are collaborating with local/regional economic development agencies and organizations and businesses. The EDA University Center and St. Bonaventure have agreed to explore ways to share the results of their research efforts through presentations and publications targeted to the region, as well as to community and economic development agencies more generally.

Project Related Outreach

- Project Newsletter (targeted to the region)
- Cornell University Newsletter
- Regional Newspapers
- Olean Times Herald. Article on Cattaraugus County Entrepreneur Task Force and the EDA University Center. Title: “More help for area businesses.” (September 2010).
ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES IN WHICH CORNELL EDA UNIVERSITY CENTER WAS A PARTNER

Sustainable Communities Webinar on “Leadership Development as a Community and Economic Development Strategy” (Sept. 2010).

Leadership is an important component of successful community and economic development initiatives. New York is fortunate to have many leadership development programs. In this 1.5 hour webinar we (1) discussed some of the ways “leadership” is understood; (2) explored the ways leadership contributes to community and economic development, (3) identified some elements of successful leadership development programs; (4) showcased two innovative leadership development programs in NY’s Southern Tier; and (5) explored ways NYS leadership programs can work together to strengthen leadership development opportunities and leadership across the state.

Future of Rural New York Seminar Series

The Future of Rural New York Seminar Series brings together researchers, policymakers, Extension educators, and agency staff to collectively address topics of interest to New York Communities.

Friday, November 19th 2010, Cumulative Impact Assessment: What is it and why does it matter? Development projects and policies often have notable impacts on communities, individuals and ecosystems. When environmental, social and economic impacts of such projects are evaluated, the effects are typically examined individually and in response to a specific proposed action. Unfortunately, this approach to evaluation - one action at a time - can overlook important cumulative impacts. Both informed decision making and adequate protection of people, communities, and the environment are undermined when cumulative impacts are ignored.

See CaRDI's recent publication on this topic at: http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardí/publications/research-and-policy-brief-series.cfm

Marcellus Shale Natural Gas

The Marcellus Shale is a geologic shale bed that extends across much of Pennsylvania and southern New York State, and is estimated to contain one of the world’s largest deposits of natural gas. Landowners, municipal and state officials, energy firms, and concerned citizens are all stakeholders. Each of these groups has a range of interests, responsibilities, and opinions. Recent intensive natural gas development in other states has been accompanied by substantial changes in established trends in population, land
use, environment, community, and economy. These changes have the potential to transform the fabric of many—especially rural—communities in NYS in ways that are both positive and negative.

Accomplishments include: dissemination of a wide variety of materials that support informed dialogue and decision making on the natural gas development process and associated impacts; enhanced naturalgas.cce.cornell.edu website; support of academic research at Cornell University that targets development impacts and mitigation strategies; development of a white paper on a systems approach to energy transitions; community and energy inservice offered for extension educators and energy smart community coordinators; community and energy workshop offered at the Cornell Municipal Clerks Institute; enhanced understanding by municipalities and community task forces of the array of possible impacts and strategies for mitigation and monitoring; and development of a platform for working with municipalities and local officials on community energy planning.

### Canal Innovation Corridor Initiative

The project originated at a December 2, 2009 meeting held in Syracuse, New York among Cornell University Cooperative Extension leaders, Cornell University faculty and staff, representatives of the New York State Department of Labor, and representatives of several other NYS agencies interested in economic development and innovation in both rural and urban communities of Upstate New York. The discussion at this meeting identified the opportunity to link industry sectors in the metro-regional areas situated along the Erie Canal Corridor of Upstate New York (e.g., Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica-Rome, Albany) to form one or more innovation clusters capable of transformative economic development. The goals of these innovation clusters would be to grow existing businesses within New York State to allow greater participation in regional, national, and global commerce; incubate entrepreneurship through training and the attraction of public and private investment in new businesses; engage in technology commercialization in partnership with New York State institutions of higher education; and foster the creation of a shared cultural and business identity across Upstate New York communities.

In spring 2010, in partnership with the New York State Department of Labor, and with EDA funding and staff support from Cornell University, a series of search conferences was launched to examine the feasibility of the Canal Innovation.
Corridor concept. As a result of search conferences we have summarized top priorities and initial tactical plans developed from each of the four regional meetings held in the state. We are rapidly moving ahead on this multi-regional initiative and are planning a meeting in Syracuse sometime in May 2011 to bring the multiple regional leaders together to continue to formulate a strategy for moving forward.

**Green Collar Pipeline Initiative**

Increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy are important strategies in meeting state and local energy goals. An effective way to increase energy efficiency is through whole-building energy retrofits, something that is actively being promoted, especially to home owners and small businesses that would benefit directly from lowered utility costs. Currently, there is not a sufficient trained workforce to meet the need if there were to be a surge in retrofits in the next two to four years. Therefore, the Green Collar Pipeline Initiative will focus on the steps, organized into a pathway necessary, to expand the workforce in energy-related fields in order to meet the projected increase in demand for energy retrofits. While there are workforce development efforts already underway that could apply to energy fields, they are not sufficiently coordinated and accessible to those seeking employment.

A key deliverable will be an Energy Careers Pathway. The term pathway rather than pipeline was chosen because people’s career paths are rarely linear. Once complete, the Energy Careers Pathway will reduce barriers to those wishing to enter or progress along the pathway, and raise awareness among these targeted populations of the opportunities available on the pathway, and serve as a model for green collar worker development entities in other counties in New York that will be undertaking similar efforts. The Energy Careers Pathway will also be investigated as a model for other green collar jobs.

The project is drawing on existing resources and supports offered through agencies and educational institutions in order to show how people can enter and progress along a career path in energy fields. Creation of the pathway involves working with the County Workforce Investment Board and other local and state-wide workforce development entities to determine current worker capacities relative to green jobs and projected job numbers and skills necessary to fill those jobs for the next two years. Staff members working on the initiative have begun to describe workforce pools, workforce development and job opportunities in the energy arena. Pilot surveys were conducted to identify the needs of contractors who currently employ energy workers and to identify barriers that prevent potential employees from entering these fields.

Staff will expand the analysis of perceived and real barriers to entering the pathway by low income workers, thus providing opportunities to identify ways to address those barriers. Existing green jobs data will also be gathered and organized for use by all actors in the Green Collar Pipeline Initiative. Gaps in services and potential strategies to fill those gaps will be identified as the project progresses. Special attention will be given to
making sure the pathway is relevant and helpful to low-income populations and people in groups who have traditionally had a hard time finding or retaining jobs.

While the pathway will focus on careers related to home and small-business energy retrofit, many of the steps on the pathway are expected to apply to other green collar jobs. Each step in the development of the pathway will be documented in an effort to track the strengths and opportunities of the process.

Successful creation of the pathway would not only provide direct value to Tompkins County’s efforts in workforce development but would also provide an indication of the applicability of the conceptual frame to green collar workforce development in other counties in New York. As the Green Careers Pathway is developed, it will be shared with other Cornell Cooperative Extension associations such as through a workshop during a November 2010 in-service training and via a system-wide energy newsletter and related website.